



Bill #	<b>HB646</b>
Position	<b>SUPPORT</b>

March 9, 2022

Dear Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee—

I am writing to you in **strong support for SB646 Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland - Funding for Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission**. The bill is asking for an annual budget of \$900,000 from the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF) to be funded to the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland for their SMADC department (TCCSMD/SMADC). The CRF fund is part of the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) that comes into the state every year in perpetuity. SMADC currently receives \$900,000 from that fund, however it is due to sunset soon; this bill would ensure that SMADC continues to receive funding from the continual non-lapsing CRF fund.

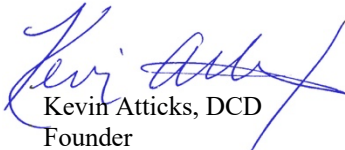
For many years now, SMADC has utilized the CRF fund to help farmers transition out of tobacco production and into other sectors of agriculture. SMADC has a proven track record in providing valuable assistance, programs, and grant funds to the farming community, as well as being a valued partner to other ag industry organizations such as the Maryland Farm Bureau, MARBIDCO, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, and others.

SMADC has served Maryland's value-added agriculture community by:

- Offering grants to encourage a transition to from tobacco to vineyards, a long-term, high-value crop;
- Funding reports and studies on value-added agriculture, forestry and more, directing farmers and entrepreneurs to precise opportunities;
- Executing complex plans to develop marketing programs, on-farm processing and equipment coordination efforts to make real impacts and enhance local business' operations.

We urge your support of this critical organization.

Sincerely,



Kevin Atticks, DCD  
Founder

*Cultivating an environment where value-added agricultural producers,  
startups, operators and growers innovate and thrive.*